

August 5, 2002

PROCEEDING: 98-67

**RE: PETITION OF ULTRATEC, INC., TO RECOGNIZE CAPTEL AS AN
ENHANCED VCO SERVICE IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES**

The FCC is commended for considering the petition of Ultratec, Inc., which asks that CapTel be recognized as an enhanced Voice Carryover (VCO) service in telecommunications relay services. I am a consumer who is late-deafened and active in both the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Association for Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA). I also have a cochlear implant and represent the deaf community on the California Relay Service Advisory Committee (CRSAC).

CapTel combines VCO with Fastran (speech-to-text) and thus makes both sides of the conversation flow at a natural, real-time pace. CapTel has generated much excitement among members of both ALDA and the NAD. At a recent demonstration at the CRSAC, the late-deafened representative practically leaped over the table with joy when he realized how he could use CapTel!

Having watched the development of CapTel over the last several years, and had the opportunity to personally test it in field trials, I find that relayed conversations flow more naturally for the hearing party that I am speaking to. I feel as if I am as much in control of my side of the conversation as I used to be when I could hear and that the overall quality is superior to traditional relay, with or without VCO.

With relay service, I have always been most concerned about the experience of the hearing party at the other end of the line. Conversations need to be as comfortable and appropriate for that person as it is for me and both of us need to be able to project ourselves to the same degree we would if I could hear. CapTel is a way to achieve this goal.

For example, I regularly call a rental car agency near my home to reserve a car and usually speak to the same agent. In the past I used either traditional relay (with the communications assistant voicing what I typed) or VCO (speaking for myself). However, when I used CapTel to call the same person and then went in to the agency to pickup the car, the agent remarked she far preferred the CapTel call to the means by which I had always called before.

Please give serious consideration to Ultratec's petition. Know that it has enthusiastic support from people who are deaf, late-deafened, or hard of hearing.

Sincerely yours,

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